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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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Steffen Thiel

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EXAMINER

SELLERS, DANIEL R

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2615

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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3 MONTHS

04/23/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/088,968

Applicant(s)

THIEL ET AL.

Examiner

Daniel R. Sellers

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 July 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 16-30 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 16-30 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 10 July 2002 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Information Disclosure Statement

1. The information disclosure statement filed March 26, 2002 fails to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(3) because it does not include a concise explanation of the relevance, as it is presently understood by the individual designated in 37 CFR 1.56(c) most knowledgeable about the content of the information, of each patent listed that is not in the English language. It has been placed in the application file, but the information referred to therein has not been considered.

Drawings

2. The drawings are objected to because the drawings included in a preliminary amendment filed on 7/10/2002 remain un-translated. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top

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margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

4. **Claims 16-26 and 30** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being clearly anticipated by Van Ryzin, USPN 6,052,471.

5. Regarding **claim 16**, Van Ryzin teaches a control device for establishing an information-output ranking of a plurality of information sources including audio sources (abstract), comprising:

an arrangement for establishing the information-output ranking in pairs for the audio sources in an information-output matrix set-up having a nonlinear order with respect to matrix elements; (Fig. 3 and Col. 5, lines 30-44) and

an arrangement for outputting information from the information sources to a common information-output device (Col. 1, lines 13-34).

6. Regarding **claim 17**, the further limitation of claim 16, Van Ryzin teaches a control device, further comprising a selection device for selecting different attributes

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which are assigned to the matrix elements of an information-source pair (Col. 4, lines 21-27 and Fig. 3).

7. Regarding **claim 18**, the further limitation of claim 17, Van Ryzin teaches the control device, further comprising an input device for inputting the matrix elements together with the selected attributes (Col. 4, lines 27-28).

8. Regarding **claim 19**, the further limitation of claim 16, Van Ryzin teaches the control device, further comprising a video screen (Col. 1, lines 21-23 and lines 41-45).

9. Regarding **claim 20**, the further limitation of claim 18, Van Ryzin teaches the control device, further comprising a storage device for storing the inputted matrix elements (see the preceding argument with respect to claim 17, the creation and editing of the priority table inherently uses a storage device for storing the inputted matrix).

10. Regarding **claim 21**, the further limitation of claim 16, Van Ryzin teaches the control device, further comprising a management device for managing a series of information sources in a waiting list (Col. 4, lines 32-39).

11. Regarding **claim 22**, the further limitation of claim 16, Van Ryzin teaches the control device, wherein the information-output device is at least one of a loudspeaker and a headphone (Col. 1, lines 24-34; teaches a typical receiver in a home theater setup, which typically uses one of a loudspeaker and a headphone for audio output).

12. Regarding **claim 23**, see the preceding argument with respect to claim 16. Van Ryzin teaches these features, wherein the output is to a common pre-amplifier stage of the receiver (Fig. 1 & 2).

13. Regarding **claim 24**, the further limitation of claim 23, see the preceding argument with respect to claim 17. Van Ryzin teaches these features.

14. Regarding **claim 25**, the further limitation of claim 23, see the preceding argument with respect to claim 18. Van Ryzin teaches these features.

15. Regarding **claim 26**, the further limitation of claim 23, see the preceding argument with respect to claim 20. Van Ryzin teaches these features.

16. Regarding **claim 30**, the further limitation of claim 23, see the preceding argument with respect to claim 21. Van Ryzin teaches these features.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

17. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

18. **Claims 27 and 28** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Van Ryzin as applied to claim 26 above, and further in view of Callahan, USPN 4,306,114.

19. Regarding **claim 27**, the further limitation of claim 26, Van Ryzin teaches the control method, further comprising the step of selecting, based on an attribute of a matrix element assigned to an information-source pair by interruption (see the preceding argument with respect to claim 23). Van Ryzin does not teach the selection

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between relieving and interrupting the corresponding information source that is active longer.

Callahan teaches an automatic selection between priorities by digitally fading the signal (Col. 1, lines 7-15 and Fig. 2, unit 38), wherein fading teaches a mode of selection which relieves or interrupts the corresponding information source that is active longer (Col. 1, line 46 - Col. 2, line 15). It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings of Van Ryzin and Callahan for the purpose of selecting a method of switching. Callahan teaches the selection of gently fading in and out of music directly, and the selection of interrupting is implied by the prior art of Callahan. Furthermore the selection would allow the user to have editing control, wherein the solution of switching abruptly would be desirable in some situations, (i.e. to avoid the noise caused by the turntable when the needle reaches the end of a record).

20. Regarding **claim 28**, the further limitation of claim 26, see the preceding argument with respect to claim 27. The combination of Van Ryzin and Callahan teaches the selection between an abrupt transition and a smooth cross-fading.

21. **Claim 29** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Van Ryzin as applied to claim 26 above, and further in view of Hadley et al., USPN 5,243,640 (hereinafter Hadley).

22. Regarding **claim 29**, the further limitation of claim 26, see the preceding argument with respect to claim 26. Van Ryzin teaches the features of claim 26.

However, Van Ryzin does not teach the selection between separating and superposing two corresponding information sources.

Hadley teaches a system, which selects by priority between an audio system and a cellular phone (abstract, Col. 1, line 62 - Col. 2, line 10). It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings of Van Ryzin and Callahan for providing a priority for telephones in a home theater or other audio setup.

Conclusion

23. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Wagner, USPN 4,742,348 - teaches a matrix device for the assignment of priorities (abstract);

Donner, USPN 5,722,069 - teaches a priority system in a vehicle (abstract); and

Becker, USPN 6,157,725 - teaches another priority system in a vehicle (abstract and fig. 1).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Daniel R. Sellers whose telephone number is 571-272-7528. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday, 9am to 5:30pm.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Sinh Tran can be reached on (571)272-7564. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



SINH TRAN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

DRS